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UNCLAS LJUBLJANA 000283

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PINR](#) [SI](#) [EUN](#)

SUBJECT: SLS TO PULL MINISTERS AND LEAVE COALITION

REF: A. LJUBLJANA 0279

[B](#). LJUBLJANA 0265

[1](#)1. (U) IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING AN 05 APRIL MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE PEOPLES PARTY (SLS), SLS PRESIDENT JANEZ PODOBNIK ANNOUNCED THAT THE THREE SLS MINISTERS (JUSTICE MINISTER IVAN BIZJAK, TRANSPORT MINISTER JAKOB PRESECNIK, AND AGRICULTURE MINISTER FRANC BUT) WOULD BE OFFERING THEIR RESIGNATIONS IN THE COMING DAYS. THE MOVE IS IN RESPONSE TO PM ROP'S DECISION (REF A) TO EXCLUDE SLS FROM ALL GOVERNING COALITION DECISION-MAKING FOLLOWING SLS'S FAILURE TO SUPPORT MINISTERS KEBER AND BOHINC DURING RECENT NO CONFIDENCE VOTES (REF B). A FORMAL SLS WITHDRAWAL FROM GOVERNMENT DOES NOT ENDANGER THE COALITION'S PARLIAMENTARY DOMINANCE. TOGETHER, THE REMAINING THREE GOS PARTIES -- LDS, ZLSD, AND DESUS STILL HOLD 49 OF THE 90 NATIONAL ASSEMBLY SEATS AND RETAIN THE GENERAL SUPPORT OF THE TWO ETHNIC MINORITY REPRESENTATIVES.

[1](#)2. (SBU) COMMENT: THIS DEVELOPMENT IS REALLY AN SLS ATTEMPT TO SALVAGE AS MUCH VOTER RESPECT AS IT CAN POSSIBLY CLING TO, AFTER BADLY MISMANAGING THE PUBLIC RELATIONS ASPECTS OF ITS FAILURE TO SUPPORT BOHINC AND KEBER. TO HAVE GAINED THE LARGEST SHARE OF VOTER CONFIDENCE, THE SLS SHOULD HAVE TAKEN A PRINCIPLED STANCE FROM THE START -- MAKING A BIG SHOW OF PULLING OUT OF THE COALITION AND EAGERLY VOTING FOR THE INTERPELLATIONS AGAINST BOHINC AND KEBER. INSTEAD, THEY APPEARED INDECISIVE AND WISHY-WASHY BECAUSE THEY ABSTAINED RATHER THAN FOLLOWING THROUGH ON THREATS TO VOTE AGAINST KEBER AND BOHINC AND THEN RESPONDED TO ROP'S BANISHMENT BY ASSERTING THEIR INTENTION TO REMAIN IN GOVERNMENT (REF A).

LEAVING THE COALITION NOW MAY SAVE THEM FROM TOTAL IRRELEVANCE, BUT MAKES IT UNLIKELY THEY CAN STEAL VOTES FROM OTHER COALITION PARTIES. SLS MAY STILL PICK UP SOME ELECTORAL SUPPORT AT THE EXPENSE OF OTHER OPPOSITION PARTIES, BUT BY CHICKENING OUT ON THE INTERPELLATIONS, THEY HAVE DIMINISHED THOSE CHANCES AS WELL. END COMMENT.

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